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The Boys and Girls Club, Holyoke Massachusetts

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The Boys and Girls Club, Holyoke Massachusetts

By: Wesley Olin

One uneventful winter day,
Mikey said, “you have to know...”
I asked him what he had to say,
Or what it was he had to show.

But he sat quietly and still,
As his thoughts stirred in his head,
Then lifting eyes up into mine,
Said faintly: “Wes, my daddy’s dead.”

Then I reached out and drew him close,
So that I could feel his hurt,
And he clung to me with wet eyes,
As though I’d sewn him to my shirt.

Yet Mikey’s dad was 28,
Just older than myself.
And all his life he had been
In perfectly good health.

An accident then, must be, I thought
Something happened on the road,
He must have lost the car’s control,
Out there in the winter snow.

But Mikey said nothing more,
He had gone stiff and numb.
He pulled away from my embrace,
And started sucking on his thumb.

Later on, the day now done,
I went up to my boss,
And told her what Mikey had said,
About his awful loss.

And she replied that she knew—
“How terrible and how sad,
Those dangerous people who had been
Mixed up with Mikey’s dad.

Confused I asked, “What do you mean?”
“Oh I guess you didn’t hear,
Mikey’s dad was shot last night,
For lotto tickets and some beer.”

And then she said something that
I'll never quite forget:
"At least he lived to 28,
That's more than most here get."